

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 307336
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011

DRAFTED BY S/S:SVALERGA:WES

APPROVED BY S/S:SVALERGA

-----011624 250122Z /62

O 250032Z DEC 77 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 307336

NODIS

CHEROKEE FOR Z BRZEZINSKI

FOL RPT TEL AVIV 11071 SENT ACTION SECSTATE & CAIRO DTD 24 DEC 77

QUOTE: S E C R E T TEL AVIV 11071

EXDIS TREAT AS NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

CAIRO FOR AMBASSADOR AND USDEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, EG, IS, US XF

SUBJECT: PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING WITH BEGIN

REF: A) STATE 306141, B) STATE 307136, C) TEL AVIV 11023

1. I MET WITH BEGIN AT HIS HOME IN JERUSALEM AT 1800
HOURS ON DECEMBER 24 TO CONVEY THE SECRETARY'S
MESSAGE IN REF A. ATTORNEY GENERAL BARAK WAS THE ONLY
OTHER PERSON PRESENT. BEGIN WAS OBVIOUSLY TIRED AND
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 307336

LOOKING FORWARD WITH A DEFINITE LACK OF ENTHUSIASM TO
THE RESUMED SESSION OF HIS MEETING WITH THE KNESSET'S
SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, SCHEDULED FOR
LATER THIS EVENING AND DUE TO CONTINUE UNTIL MIDNIGHT(F).
HE SAID THAT THE SESSION YESTERDAY AFTERNOON
WITH THE KNESSET'S LIKUD FACTION WAS A DIFFI-
CULT ONE FOR HIM, ALTHOUGH THE FACTION SUPPORTED HIS

POSITION WITH ONLY TWO ABSTENTIONS. THE FACT THAT THOSE TWO ABSTENTIONS HAD COME FROM TWO OF HIS OLDEST AND CLOSEST ASSOCIATES FROM HIS IRGUN DAYS, GEULA COHEN AND YITZHAK SHAMIR, WAS PAINFUL FOR HIM. HE SAID IT WAS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT NOT TO HAVE TOTAL SUPPORT FROM HIS OWN POLITICAL MOVEMENT, BUT HE ACCEPTED THE NECESSITY OF HAVING TO DISAGREE WITH THESE OLD COLLEAGUES. "AS THE FRENCH SAY, C'EST LA VIE AND C'EST LA PAIX," HE SAID WITH A RUEFUL SMILE.

2. BEGIN SAID THAT THE DISCUSSION WITH THE KNESSET'S SECURITY COMMITTEE WAS ALSO A VERY LIVELY AND AT TIMES DIFFICULT ONE. OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN LIKE GENERAL BAR-LEV FORMER CHIEF OF STAFF AND ALSO FORMER MINISTER OF COMMERCE, HAD BEEN VERY UPSET AT THE EXTENT OF HIS PROPOSED SINAI WITHDRAWAL. THEY HAD STRESSED THE GREAT RISKS THIS WOULD ENTAIL FOR ISRAEL, AND, SAID BEGIN, "IT DOES MEAN TAKING REAL RISKS." BUT, HE SAID, "WE MUST TAKE SUCH RISKS TO ACHIEVE PEACE."

3. BEFORE DELIVERING THE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE, I THANKED BEGIN FOR THE DETAILED DEBRIEFING WHICH EZER WEIZMAN HAD GIVEN ME YESTERDAY ON HIS MEETING WITH GAMASY AND SADAT. I SAID I WAS FRANKLY PUZZLED ABOUT THE APPARENT INCONSISTENCY OF SADAT'S STATEMENTS TO WEIZMAN ABOUT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 307336

DEMILITARIZATION IN THEIR SECOND MEETING, AND WHAT BEGIN HAD REPORTED SADAT HAD SAID ON THIS SUBJECT DURING HIS VISIT TO JERUSALEM. DRAWING DISCREETLY ON CAIRO'S 22762, I SAID THAT PERHAPS THE DISTINCTION IS ONE OF FORMAL AGREEMENT ON DEMILITARIZATION VERSUS SADAT'S INTENTIONS TO KEEP HIS MAIN MILITARY FORCES WEST OF THE PASSES AND DEPLOY ONLY FRONTIER TYPE GUARDS FURTHER EAST. BEGIN SAID HE HOPED THIS WAS THE CASE AND THAT HE WOULD TALK TO SADAT ABOUT IT TOMORROW. HE AGAIN QUOTED SADAT'S STATEMENTS TO HIM HERE TO THE EFFECT THAT "MY FORCES WILL NOT GO EAST OF THE PASSES."

4. I THEN WENT CAREFULLY THROUGH THE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE, FOLLOWING CLOSELY THE TEXT OF REF A. BEGIN LISTENED VERY INTENTLY AND NODDED HIS AGREEMENT SEVERAL TIMES, ESPECIALLY WHEN I MADE THE POINT THAT SADAT APPROACHES PROBLEMS ON A BROAD PLANE AND HOPES THAT BEGIN WILL TAKE A SIMILAR APPROACH. HE HAD OBVIOUSLY HAD A FULL REPORT FROM DINITZ ON THE LATTER'S MEEING WITH THE SECRETARY (REF B) AND HAD ANTICIPATED THE GENERAL TENOR OF THE MESSAGE I WAS IMPARTING. HE

PARTICULARLY EXPRESSED HIS GRATITUDE FOR THE SENTIMENTS
IN PARA FIVE REF A.

5. WHEN I HAD FINISHED, BEGIN SAID HE WOULD LIKE ME TO CONVEY
TO THE SECRETARY AND TO THE PRESEIDENT THREE POINTS.

A. HE HAD WORKED HARD TO TRY TO PRODUCE A NEW DRAFT
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES (REF C) WHICH HE BELIEVED WAS
EMINENTLY FAIR AND WHICH HE HOPED WOULD BE ALONG THE LINES OF
WHAT MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE TO SADAT. FI IN SADAT'S VIEW,
IT REQUIRES MODIFICATION, HE IS PREPARED TO SEE WHETHER AMENDMENTS
CANNOT BE MADE. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY DAYAN OF THE
POSSIBLE ADDITION TO THE DECLARATION WHICH I HAD SUGGESTED (REF
C, PARA THREE) TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THE SELF-RULE ARRANGEMENTS
FOR THE PALESTINIANS WERE TRANSITORY OF PROVISIONAL
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 307336

RATHER THAN PERMANENT. HE SAID HE THOUGHT THAT HE COULD
MAKE A CHANGE ALONG THESE LINES IF SADAT REQUESTED IT.
HE PREFERRED NOT TO SUGGEST FURTHER CHANGES HIMSELF,
BUT IF SADAT ASKED THAT SOME SUCH CHANGE BE MADE,
HE THOUGHT HE COULD ACCOMMODATE HIM. IF THAY CAN AGREE
ON A DECLARATION, BEGIN WOULD BE PREPARED TO HAVE IT
MADE ACCORDING TO SADAT'S WISHES, EITHER IN CAIRO
IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S PRESENCE, IN WASHINGTON WITH
SADAT AND BEGIN PRESENT, OR AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE AT
THE END OF THE MEETING TOMORROW.

B. BEGIN INTENDS TO PROPOSE TO SADAT TOMORROW THAT
TWO MINISTERIAL LEVEL WORKING COMMITTEES BE ESTABLISHED,
ONE OF THE TWO DEFENSE MINISTERS TO DEAL WITH THE MILITARY
AND SECURITY ISSUES, AND ONE OF THE TWO FOREIGN
MINISTERS TO DEAL WITH POLITICAL AND CIVILIAN ISSUES.
HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THESE TWO COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED
AND BEGIN CAREFUL DETAILED WORK OVER THE DAYS AHEAD,
WITH ONE SITTING IN CAIRO AND THE OTHER SITTING IN
JERUSALEM, AND BOTH WITH ROTATING CHAIRMANSHP. WHEN
I ASKED WHY HE WOULD PROPOSE NOT HAVING THEM BOTH
REMAIN IN CAIRO AS PART OF THE CAIRO CONFERENCE, HE
SAID HE WOULD NOT MAKE AN ISSUE OF THAT IF SADAT
INSISTED. BUT HE FELT THAT IT WAS APPROPRIATE TO
HAVE ONE OF THE COMMITTEES MEETING IN JERUSALEM TO
UNDERSCORE THE EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION OF TWO PARTIES.
I DID NOT PROBE FURTHER INTO THIS CONCEPT, SINCE IT
OBVIOUSLY WILL PRESENT MANY PROBLEMS FOR SADAT AND I
DO NOT THINK BEGIN WILL INSIST ON HIS JERUSALEM GAMBIT.
BEGIN SAID THAT OF COURSE IF SADAT WISHES TO GO INTO
MORE DETAILED NEGOTIATION OR DISCUSSION OVER HIS SELF-
RULE PROPOSAL ANOTHER WORKING COMMITTEE COULD BE SET
UP TO DO SO. BUT BEGIN NOW UNDERSTANDS THE MESSAGE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 307336

WE HAVE BEEN GIVING HIM THAT SADAT WILL NOT WISH TO NEGOTIATE THE DETAILS OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, SO HE ASSUMES THAT THE WORKING COMMITTEES SHOULD CONCERN THEMSELVES EXCLUSIVELY WITH ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN ISSUES.

C. FINALLY, BEGIN WANTED ME TO CONVEY TO THE SECRETARY AND TO THE PRESIDENT HIS HOPE THAT SADAT WILL DEAL WITH HIM IN A WAY WHICH ACCEPTS THE NEED FOR MUTUAL RESPECT FOR EACH OTHERS'S PRINCIPLES. BEGIN SAID HE THOUGHT HE UNDERSTOOD SADAT'S PROBLEMS, AND HAD THE HIGHEST RESPECT FOR HIM BOTH AS A MAN AND A LEADER. HE UNDERSTOOD THE STRENGTH OF CONVICTION IN SADAT'S VIEW OF EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY AND OTHER PRINCIPLES. BUT HE HOPED SADAT RECOGNIZED THAT THERE WERE CERTAIN EQUALLY FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES FOR BEGIN AND THE ISRAELIS, AND THAT THESE COULD NOT BE ABANDONED. WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS A MUTUAL RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER'S PRINCIPLES, AND HE HOPED TO FIND THAT IN THEIR MEETINGS TOMORROW.

6. THE CONVERSATION CONCLUDED AFTER ABOUT 40 MINUTES WITH BEGIN WARMLY ASSURING ME THAT HE WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO LIVE UP TO OUR EXPECTATIONS AND TO FIND COMMON GROUND WITH SADAT. HE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT THERE WAS A GENUINE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM, AND HE KNEW THAT HE HAD EVERY RESPECT AND FRIENDLY ATTITUDE TOWARD SADAT. HE COULD NOT PROMISE PUBLICLY TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORIES; WE UNDERSTOOD WHY, HE SAID, AND HE KNEW THAT PRESIDENT CARTER UNDERSTOOD. IT WOULD BE WRONG TO MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT WHICH ISRAEL DID NOT PLAN TO CARRY OUT. BUT HE HOPED VERY MUCH THAT THE DRAFT DECLARATION WITH PERHAPS SOME AMENDMENTS WOULD HELP MEET SADAT'S REQUIREMENTS.

7. AS I LEFT I ASKED KADISHAI IN FRON TO BEGIN TO

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 307336

SEE WHAT HE COULD DO TO TRY TO GET THE PRIME MINISTER TO GO TO BED BEFORE MIDNIGHT TONIGHT. KADISHAI LOOKED SOMEWHAT RESIGNEDLY AT THE PM AND SAID HE WOULD DO HIS BEST; BEGIN'S RESPONSE WAS TO SAY HE WOULD DEFINITELY CUT OFF THE DEBATE NO LATER THAN TWELVE* I WISHED HIM GOD SPEED IN HIS MISSION TOMORROW, AND TOLD HIM THAT NOT ONLY THE SECRETARY'S PRAYERS BUT

MAY OTHER WOULD GO WITH HIM. HE WISHED ME AND MY
FAMILY THE VERY MERRIEST OF CHRISTMASES.

8. COMMENT: BEGIN UNDERSTANDS THE MESSAGE WE HAVE
BEEN TRYING TO GIVE HIM. I AM NOT AT ALL CERTAIN,
HOWEVER, THAT HE BELIEVWS THAT SADAT IS TRULY
UNWILLING TO MODIFY HIS POSITION IN THE SLIGHTEST.
(PERHAPS IN FACT BEGIN WILL BE PROVED RIGHT.) UNFORTU-
NATELY, HE IS TIRED AND HAS BEEN EMOTIONALLY BATTERED
BY THE CIRES OF OUTRAGE FROM HIS OLDES POLITICAL
ASSOCIATES ABOUT HIS SELF-RULE PROPOSAL FOR THE WEST BANK.
NONETHELESS, HE WILL RISE ABOVE FATIGUE AND
MAKE EVERY HUMAN EFFORT NOT TO ALLOW THE MEETING
TOMORROW TO FAIL. HE HAS AS MUCH RIDING ON SUCCESS
AS DOES SADAT. I AM NOT SURE EXACTLY HOW THE GAPS
WILL BE BRIDGED, BUT MY GUESS IS THAT THERE WILL BE
ENOUGH BRIDGING ACHIEVED TO ALLOW THE PROCESS OF PEACE-
MAKING TO GO FORWARD. LEWIS UNQUOTE VANCE

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, MEETINGS, CAT-B, CHEROKEE 12/24/77, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, BRIEFING MATERIALS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE307336
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SVALERGA:WES
Enclosure: REPEATING 77 TEL AVIV 11071
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: N770009-0573
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771218/aaaaaogo.tel
Line Count: 242
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1b690efd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 78 STATE 306141, 78 STATE 307136, 78 TEL AVIV 11023
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 130632
Secure: LOCK1
Status: <DBA CHANGED> MCM 20040615
Subject: PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING WITH BEGIN
TAGS: PGOV, EG, IS, US, XF, (BEGIN, MENAHEM)
To: WHITE HOUSE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1b690efd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009